

Making a complaint about the National Guardian's Office

The National Guardian Office views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint. If you do wish to make a complaint, our complaints policy is set out below.

The purpose of our policy

This policy is intended to ensure that:

- the policy is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- anyone can make a complaint about our work simply and quickly
- complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- feedback about a complaint is given promptly
- complaints are used as an opportunity to learn and improve

What we regard as a complaint

We consider a complaint to be any expression of dissatisfaction about the work of the National Guardian's Office that requires a response. For example, you may wish to make a complaint if you believe:

- we have treated you unfairly, or unreasonably
- you have received a poor service from us
- our staff have behaved in a manner during the course of their work which is not in accordance with our code of conduct
- we have not acted in accordance with our policies and procedures

What we will not treat as a complaint

- requests for either comments on or interventions in individual cases, or requests for a remedy in those cases
- disagreements with or suggestions for changes to the remit and scope of the National Guardian's Office
- matters related to contractual or commercial disputes involving the National Guardian's office
- appeals regarding the handling of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act, or the Data Protection Act

Suggestions on improvement

We welcome comments and suggestions on any part of our work. If you have any you would like to send to us please get in touch at:

enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk

How to make your complaint

Complaints about the National Guardian's Office can be sent to:

National Guardian's Office
151 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 9SZ

or emailed to: enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk.

How we will deal with your complaint

If your complaint relates to how our office operates, or the decisions we have made, we will usually look into this matter ourselves.

Examples of complaints regarding our operations could include:

- the length of time it takes us to deal with an enquiry you have made to our office
- not sending you information where we have undertaken to do so

Before looking into your complaint we will contact you to discuss it further with you, in order to confirm the details of your complaint and how we will respond to it.

We will undertake our investigation into your complaint as soon as possible. Once it is complete we will inform you of our provisional decision at which point you will have the opportunity to comment or provide us with additional information.

If you provide any additional comments or information we may then decide to look into your complaint further. If you do not do so, or once we have completed any further investigation, we will then inform you of our final decision. This will include details of any actions we will take to address the issues you have raised.

External investigations of complaints by our Accountability and Liaison Board

Where your complaint relates to the conduct of one of our team, or there are other reasons why we might consider it more appropriate for an external investigation, this will be investigated by our Accountability and Liaison Board.

Our Accountability and Liaison Board oversees the work of our office and comprises members from our sponsoring bodies, NHS Improvement, NHS England and the Care Quality Commission.

Where our board undertakes the investigation of a complaint it will do so with the support from those sponsoring organisations.

Before an external investigation is begun, the person carrying it out will contact you to discuss your complaint further, to confirm their understanding of the matters involved and to agree with you how they will handle it.

All necessary steps will be taken to complete the investigation as thoroughly and as soon as is practicable. The process may include gathering documents and interviewing members of staff at the National Guardian's Office.

Once the investigation is complete a provisional recommendation will be shared with you and the National Guardian's Office to give you an opportunity to comment and/or provide any new information.

Any comments or further information will be considered before a final decision is at made at board level by the Advisory and Liaison Board.

We will then inform you of the final decision, including any action we intend to take.

Timescales

In all cases we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days. We will then contact you to discuss the timescales for the completion of investigation into your complaint.

Our target for the completion of investigations into all types of complaints is 20 working days, although longer may be needed in some cases. Where we think an investigation is likely to take longer than 20 days we will tell you about this.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with our legal obligations under the Data Protection Act.

What to do if you are unhappy with the outcome

We hope that you will be happy with how we handle your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with our response we give you can complain to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO):

PHSO Helpline: 0345 015 4033

Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.co.uk